



## STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

# Press Release

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### **Behavioral Health Workers from the RI Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals to Participate in Rhode Island National Guard Training**

Cranston, RI – Behavioral health workers from the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH), along with behavioral health service providers across Rhode Island and from neighboring states, will spend September 22 and 23 training with the Rhode Island National Guard at Camp Fogarty on South County Trail in East Greenwich.

The event, named “Operation Immersion” is co-hosted by BHDDH and the Rhode Island National Guard. Attendees will experience parts of military life, including receiving platoon assignments at check-in, marching drills, “rise and shine”, roll call, physical training, military vehicle convoy training (through a simulator) and taps before lights out at night.

Program participants will also receive training directly related to behavioral health, such as substance use disorders and the returning soldier, military culture, and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) issues unique to soldiers. Servicemen and women will share their stories about deployment, and military family members will talk about their experiences before, during and after the deployment of loved ones.

“Rhode Island has had the second highest per capita deployment rate of the country’s 54 states and territories”, says Craig Stenning, Director of BHDDH. “As a result, there is a higher incidence of mental health issues. Most deployed servicemen and women come back and re-assimilate into the community, but some do not easily return to a civilian lifestyle. It is important for BHDDH and other behavioral health service providers to better understand some of the issues military personnel face in order to more effectively meet their needs.”

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“Unlike our active duty counterparts, the men and women of the National Guard are uniquely situated, in that they return from combat and very quickly return to their civilian lives” noted Major General Kevin McBride, the Adjutant General of Rhode Island and Commander of the Rhode Island National Guard. “Given this dynamic, it is critically important that the community-based mental health providers recognize the specific manifestations of deployment-related problems. We are thankful to BHDDH for recognizing this need and addressing it in a creative and meaningful way”, concluded McBride.

For more information about the program, behavioral health service providers, public safety officials or other interested parties should contact Brenda Amodei at 401-462-1747; [BAmodei@bhddh.ri.gov](mailto:BAmodei@bhddh.ri.gov) or Corinna Roy at 401-462-0455; [CRoy@bhddh.ri.gov](mailto:CRoy@bhddh.ri.gov).

**About the Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals.**

BHDDH is committed to assuring access to quality services and support for Rhode Islanders with developmental disabilities, mental health and substance abuse issues and chronic, long-term medical and psychiatric conditions. In addition to planning for the development of new services and prevention activities, the department’s mission includes addressing the stigma attached to these disabilities.

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